

LYCOPERDON FORNICATUM.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Fungus subrotundus, feminibus farinaccis impalpabilibus repletus, ab apice dehiscens.

Lin. gen. plant. p. 569.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

LYCOPERDON volva quadrifida fornicata, capitulo glabro; ore obtuso ciliato.

Huds. Flor. Angl. 2. p. 644.

LYCOPERDON coronatum.

Schoeff. fung. t. 183.

Geaster volvæ radiis et operculo elevatis.

Wats. act. angl. No. 474. p. 234.

Fungus pulverulentus turriculam fornicatam referens.

Blackst. spec. bot. 24. t. 2.

Ordo ille classis cryptogamicæ nomine *Fungorum* distinctus in tot species spargitur, ut eas plene et perfecte cognoscere solertissimis et diligentissimis botanicis vix concedatur; tantaque præterea est ipsarum specierum varietas, ut in iis investigandis delassentur plane tyrones et incerti laborent, ni plurimos qui de iis conscripserint auctores cum figuris præstantissimis in solatium sibi et auxilium invocent. Nonnullis tamen fungis certa adeo est crescendi norma,

ma, formaque tam constans et fere perpetua, ut femel cogniti cum aliis vix confundi possint. Inter tales merito numeratur ille qui *Lycoperdon fornicatum* nominatur, in aridis ripis præcipue visus ubi humus laxior et friabilis. E plantis est rarioribus quæ in Britannia gignuntur. Simul atque ab humo attollitur donec amplius augeri desinat, subrotunda est seu leviter ovata, magnitudine mali parvuli, constatque e globo centrali valva tenui obducto tunicisque duabus concentricis involuto, quarum exterior superficiem habet nonnihil scabrosam. Continentur inter hæc tunicas viscidum et mucosum quoddam fluidum. Cum vero ad plenam magnitudinem adoleverit, quasi arte magica subito commutatur plantæ facies, assurgitque quasi templum parvulum, columnis quatuor innixum ex æquo distantibus et in summo conjunctis, globumque ipsum sustentibus quo ædes terminantur. Utcunque mira videatur subita transformatio, causa tamen nullo negotio possit exponi. Cum enim planta ad plenum aucta sit, tunicæ statim rumpuntur, quarum interior vi resiliendi penitus inversa in quatuor segmenta dividitur, quorum apices apicibus segmentorum tunicæ exterioris adhærent; quo fit ut globus centralis elevetur, ut in tabula. Eodem fere tempore semina e globi ore, pulveris tenuissimi more, exploduntur; jamque planta vicibus perfuncta remanet et quiescit. Juniori color albido-cinereus, adultæ fuscus, in diversis speciminibus plus minusve faturatus. Si anteauctis temporibus, cum adhuc in animis hominum dominaretur superstitio, compertum fuisset *Lycoperdon fornicatum*, credidisset proculdubio vulgus, non sine lepido dæmonum et empusarum dolo e planta templum assurrexisse.



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TURRET PUFF-BALL.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Roundish Fungus, opening at the top, filled with extremely minute seeds in form of a fine powder.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

LYCOPERDON (Puff-Ball) with quadrifid cap, smooth head, and obtuse ciliated opening.

TURRET PUFF-BALL.

Withering Bot. Arr. 2. p. 783.

Temple PUFF-BALL.

The particular division of the class *Cryptogamia* known by the title of *Fungi*, consists of such a prodigious number of species as almost to defy the investigation of the most zealous botanist; while the varieties to which many of them are occasionally subject, are such as to involve in the most perplexing uncertainty the enquiries of botanical students, who, unless assisted by almost every author who has either figured or described them, are too often obliged to relinquish all hope of determining the particular species they may happen to have discovered. Some however are so regular in their growth, so striking
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in their appearance, and so little liable to vary, that, when discovered, the species can scarce be mistaken. Among the Fungi which are thus remarkable may well be ranked the *Lycoperdon fornicatum*, or Turret Puff-Ball. This most curious plant grows principally on dry banks, where the soil is somewhat loose and fine. It is much less common than the other species of *Lycoperdon*, and may be considered as one of the plantæ rariores of this kingdom. At its first appearance above ground, and so long as it continues in a growing state, it is of a globular or slightly oval form, and of the size of a small apple; and consists of a central ball, covered with a slight volva, and enveloped by two concentric coats, of which the exterior is somewhat roughish on the surface; and between the two coats is contained a sort of mucilage or jelly. It is no sooner however arrived at its full growth, than, as if by an effect of magic, the whole appearance of the plant is entirely changed, and there springs up, as it were a little temple, composed of four equidistant pillars, uniting at the top, and supporting a globular head, or ball which terminates the cupola. The cause of this singular alteration is easily understood. When arrived at its full growth, the coats burst suddenly open; the interior one protruding itself upwards by its natural elasticity, becomes entirely inverted, and splits into four segments, which cohere by their tips to the corresponding ones of the outward coat: by this means the central ball is exposed, in the elevated state represented in the figure; the seeds at the same time exploding from the orifice in the form of a fine dust,

dust, and the plant, having passed thro' all the periods of vegetation, continues in the form it has thus assumed. Its color during its young or globular state is a whitish ash; but when in its ultimate form, it is generally of a brown color, more or less deep in different individuals. Had this curious vegetable been observed in the times of popular superstition, there is little doubt but it would have been considered as a Temple raised by the power of Fairies.